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LEADERSHIP--ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE.

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LEADERSHIP IN SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION MUST BEGIN IN THE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES. THE NEED FOR CHANGES IN STRUCTURE, ORGANIZATION, AND GOALS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IS BASED UPON THREE ASSUMPTIONS--(1) HIGHER EDUCATION IS LARGELY IRRELEVANT UNLESS IT FULFILLS ITS FUNCTION AS AN INSTRUMENT OF CONTINUOUS, CONSTRUCTIVE SOCIAL CRITICISM, (2) HIGHER EDUCATION SHOULD HELP STUDENTS TO GAIN A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF VALUES, IDEAS, AND SCIENTIFIC HABITS OF THOUGHT AND ACTION SO THAT THEY MAY BETTER UNDERSTAND, CONTROL, AND IMPROVE THEIR NATURAL-SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS, AND (3) SCHOOLS WILL FULFILL NEITHER OF THESE UNTIL THEY BECOME INTEGRATIVE RATHER THAN FRAGMENTIVE. OUR SOCIETY NEEDS BROAD SPECIALISTS WHO SEE THE DATA AND THEORY OF THEIR DISCIPLINES WITHIN THE BROADER CONTEXT OF OUR NATURAL-SOCIAL REALITIES. THE FUTURE INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION MUST LEARN THAT THE BEST TEACHING AND THE BEST LEARNING OCCUR IN THE COURSE OF RESEARCH INVOLVEMENT WHICH IS A METHOD OF CHANGE, NOT MERELY A DESCRIPTION OF WHAT IS. ADVANTAGES TO BE GAINED BY THIS APPROACH INCLUDE THE DESTRUCTION OF BARRIERS BETWEEN TEACHING AND RESEARCH, BROADENING OF FACULTY SCOPE, DEVELOPMENT OF A SENSE OF COMMUNITY, AND STUDENT COMMITMENT TO SOCIAL GOALS. THIS PAPER WAS DELIVERED AT THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON HIGHER EDUCATION (22ND, CHICAGO, MARCH 7, 1967). (HM)

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"LEADERSHIP: ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE"

An Address

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In 1930, that most misinterpreted and misapplied of all philosophers, John Dewey, wrote:

> "Our schooling largely evades serious consideration of the deeper issues of social life...the effective education, that which really leaves a stamp on character and thought is obtained when graduates come to take their part in the activities of an adult society which put exaggerated emphasis upon business and the results of business success."[1]

Dewey was criticizing a social philosophy which was geared to a world of scarcity. It was a world in which man's most urgent drive was to gratify basic material needs -- to solve problems relating to the allocation of scarce material resources and to the production and distribution of material goods and resources. In such a social setting man learned to value productivity and the specialization that so increased productive efficiency. Unlimited wants and scarce means were accepted as the basic givens of economic principles and practice. Self-interest, in terms of gratifying material wants, became the major motivating force of human behavior. We adhered to "natural laws" and the laws of the "free" market, without which we believed there could be no freedom. Thus, freedom we came to see as the absence of the minimum of government interference. And individualism, the exercise of freedom, became the desire and ability to compete. "Natural rights", particularly property rights, were viewed as more important than social responsibility and service to the community. Value we equated to price, and we learned to bestow higher rewards upon the

manipulators of money than upon the teachers of our children. Power we recognized as superior to understanding. And the clash of vested interests in political and economic market places we came to accept as the best means of determining social policy.

The thirties were years of depression and want. Dewey was perhaps unrealistic or premature in depreciating the importance of productivity and the drive towards material goals. And perhaps it was necessary for the schools to produce graduates with the skills and attitudes required for survival and the struggle against scarcity. One might well argue that the materialistic values constituted major parts of a social philosophy which was very much in tune with the realities of the time.

But now the realities are changing. We are the first society in the history of mankind to reach the edge of abundance. With our unprecedented explosion in scientific and technological know-how; with new frontiers of space and sea; with computers, still in the model T stage, adding brainpower to the muscle capabilities of the machine and promising a cornucopia of goods and services; with the Keynesian tools of fiscal and monetary policy which, although imperfect, are a mighty advance towards economic growth and stability -- we begin to realize that technologically, at least, we have the means for a massive and final assault against poverty and its culture, at home and abroad. We have the technology but we lack the social organization, the innovation of ideas.

There are no limits on <u>how much</u> we can produce, but we appear unable

to determine what is worth producing, and how to distribute equitably the fruits of our industry. Nor have we created the activities -- call them work, leisure, or what you will -- which develop creators rather than consumers, participants rather than spectators, doers whose doing is based on valid theory rather than thinkers who never do or doers who never think. Although they have been greatly modified, the values and assumptions of the world of scarcity are still very much accepted and applied by our political, economic, and social decision makers. What is worse is that they are still accepted and perpetuated by most of the educators in most of our institutions of higher learning. The times call for new social goals, new values and assumptions, new institutional arrangements that will allow us to complete our unfinished war against scarcity and move beyond production to the development of human potentialities.

The intellectual leadership required for our social reconstruction will not come from the Pentagon, Capitol Hill, the business community, the labor movement, or from public, private, and voluntary agencies. These decision-makers are busily engaged in countless brush wars and minor skirmishes against the <u>symptoms</u> of social problems. They are activists, unconcerned with theory. And they fail to realize that they are applying the tired theories of defunct economists and philosophers to problems that will have to be explained by new theories; that will have to be attacked through new social institutions.

The leadership <u>will</u> come when our colleges and universities -- which are or should be concerned with theory -- turn their unique resources and innovating capabilities to the tasks of social reconstruction. Unfortunately, we in education are caught up in the very web of values and assumptions it is our responsibility to review. We are caught up in the social arrangements it is our responsibility to change. Our reconstruction, then, must begin in the schools themselves. And the time has come to ask what changes are required in the structure and organization of our colleges and universities. Clearly this is a question that has no simple, single answer. It must be approached through the thoughts, experiments and actions of all educators concerned with the future of man.

This afternoon I would like to suggest one idea that I hope will prove worthy of your consideration and experimentation. It is based upon three assumptions. The first is that higher education is largely irrelevant unless it fulfills its function as society's instrument for continuous, constructive self-criticism and social change. The second is that it should help students to gain a theoretical framework of values and ideas, and scientific habits of thought and action -- so that as future entrepreneurs, legislators, scientists, educators -- they may better understand, control, and improve their natural-social environments. The third is that schools will fulfill neither of these first two functions until they become integrative rather than fragmenting; until we eliminate the narrow, restrictive, disciplinary boundaries. I recently attended the annual meeting of the American Economics Association.

In the informal hallway sessions, the names of economist critics of economic theory cropped up constantly. "Galbraith, Theobald, Boulding? They're not economists, they're social philosophers" was the frequent comment, always spoken in opprobrium. And of course, the speakers, the specialists in monetary or fiscal policy, shipping procedures, econometrics and GNP accounting, were correct. For the subjects of their remarks are indeed social philosophers. But what kind of a social scientist is an economist, political scientist, sociologist or psychologist who is not also a social philosopher? He is bound to be a narrowly over-specialized technician, a mechanic who, to use an old cliche, knows more and more about less and less. This is not a plea for the end of specialization, but for the end of narrow-specialization. We need specialists who are broad-guaged, who see the data and theory of their discipline within the broader context of our natural-social realities; who know how to relate verifiable evidence from other disciplines to their own areas of competency; and who, because of this extension into related subjects, constantly improve their own comprehension and capabilities.

There is no knowledge without the understanding of relationships. And the relationships we wish to understand are those between man and nature, man and man in his natural and social settings. No meaningful relationships however, no problems, are so obliging as to fall graciously within the limits or boundaries of any single discipline. So long as we ignore the comprehensiveness of all things; so long as we continue to divide our institutions into clearly defined and delimited departments and cram each department

with sharply defined and delimited specialties within specialties, we shall continue to graduate men and women who accept rather than question old values and assumptions -- who are alienated from the realities of their time. It is an unusual student who can, without direction from his teachers, tie fragments of knowledge into a meaningful whole; into a framework for understanding his community, his nation, his world. Perhaps we can eliminate such fragmentation by building areas of our curricula, especially at the undergraduate level, not around disciplines but around questions and problems. "What is the nature of our natural and social environment? How have we organized ourselves to meet specific social needs, and what values, beliefs and attitudes underlie these institutional arrangements? What are the forces presently at work -- the trends and developments effecting change? What are the problems, the opportunities and challenges created by these developments? What alternatives for action are open to us, and what are the likely consequences of each alternative?

I would hope and expect that the institution of the future will have learned that both the best teaching and the best learning occur in the course of research involvement. By research, however, I do not mean opinion surveys, participant-observation or any other technique which limits itself to the accumulation and classification of data -- the description of what is. I am referring to scientific method, to laboratory experimentation in which scientists ask questions, select a problem; obtain, analyze, and evaluate data; predict the consequences of data changes; choose a course of action;

and use symbolic tools to simulate actual conditions and test the selection made. This is a method not of description, but of change. In this laboratory environment small groups of students with similar educational aims and background could be apprenticed to small groups of faculty with related but varied specialties. Together, students and faculty would attempt to solve the real problems of real environments, both natural and social -- wherever possible linking the two. The students, working as scientists with scientists, would have a voice in the selection of a project. Let us take an illustration.

Consider a research problem for budding social scientists. A group could assume the role of legislators in an actual American city. The task -- to legislate social improvement, overcoming whatever opposition and obstacles might appear. To begin, the group would necessarily apply itself to the first question around which our curriculum is based. "What is our environment -- our community like? The students would find that a study of this community requires not a detailed knowledge of any one discipline, but an understanding of social institutions. How, for example, is this community organized to allocate its resources and produce and distribute goods and services? How does it maintain law and order and effect change? What arrangements does this community make for educating its young? Where have these and other social institutions been effective and where are they breaking down?

From here the group moves to our next curriculum question. Why are

the social arrangements as they are? What are the historical circumstances behind their formation? Under what values and assumptions were the people operating who were responsible for the creation of such institutions? Are they still valid? And so to the third curriculum question. What are the forces presently at work -- the trends and developments affecting change? Here the group is confronted with the effects upon the community of cybernation and automation, of decisions made by the Common Market in Europe, of national economic policies, of the gain or loss of a defense contract, of a movement to the city of poor farmers or southern Negroes in search of a better life.

Once recognizing and understanding the forces operating to change our city, the group can move on the fourth curriculum question. "What are the problems, the opportunities, and the challenges created by these developments"? In attempting to answer this last question, the group can not long remain aloof from the human condition. For they are no longer dealing with egos, ids, and superegos, but with human beings whose usefulness is seemingly destroyed by new machines; with people caught up by forces they can neither understand nor control.

Finally -- what alternatives of action are open to us as legislators? What bills should we try to pass? What would be the likely consequences if our bills became law? What new potential problems can we anticipate and what additional legislation could prevent these problems or modify their effects? What legislation, in other words,

will allow us to make maximum use of our technology and our resources, and help us to design institutions which will improve the quality of our lives?

The method need not be limited to the social sciences. Why, for example, can not a group of students and scientists in the health and medical field take as a research problem the improvement of medical and health facilities in an actual village in India, or in a ghetto of an urban center in the United States? Following the same procedures as we have outlined, much could be learned about the relationship between the physical sciences and the social environment. And much data and theory could be made available by our institutions of higher learning to decision-makers, to those responsible for health and medicine in the villages and ghettos of the world. This educational approach would not allow the students to go off in all directions. Faculty still has the major responsibility of introducing or directing the students, at the appropriate times, to the <u>essential</u> data and theory from each of the disciplines involved. A theoretical framework must be developed, a framework which expands as new data and theory are introduced. The students work with the theory, use it, link it to what they already know, and apply it to the problems of their community. They relate theory to practice, concentrate on connections and develop that most important habit of the learning process -- the ability to place objects and events in new relationships. In the course of studying and analyzing the community, the student also becomes familiar with such tools for obtaining data as statistical skills. But in

learning statistical theory for example, he will not be dealing with the subject in the abstract. He will apply the theory immediately and directly to obtaining and evaluating data referring specifically to the community under study. Similarly, opinion research techniques might be taught through the designing of an actual survey to be taken in the community.

In attacking problems through this research method, students get new data; make, discover, learn from, and correct mistakes; bring to light new problems; and disclose gaps in present knowledge. When they achieve their end -- draw their conclusions or solve their problem -- all of this new knowledge becomes part of the means to new ends. In analyzing the meaning of their accomplishment, in going over all they have learned, the students and faculty will think in terms of the next step. Where do we go from here? What is the next problem we should attempt to solve? How can our new knowledge be of value in defining and attacking our new problem? Thus, the group moves from problem to problem, bringing in faculty from other disciplines as needed. Systematically the theoretical framework is expanded. And without such a framework, all the facts in the universe will not help the student to understand that universe.

The process of learning through research involvement of this type is certainly more exciting than the passive absorption of facts and ideas as disseminated, in lectures or discussion, by teachers anxious to get back to their research. This is not intended to

imply that every subject or area of study can or should be taught in this manner. Nor does it mean that the research participants will not attend lectures, take part in discussions, use learning machines, or read books. It does mean that the year's reading, writing, listening and discussing will be purposive. It will be preparation for research activity; means to the data and ideas pertinent to the student's project. Finally, such projects are the beginning, not the end of learning. They provide the breadth and scope necessary for the student to become broad-gauged -- before he becomes a specialist. And when the time arrives for him to select his area of specialization, he will be able to draw upon an experience which involved him in the material and meaning of many disciplines.

In applying this method in the schools, the nature of the projects, the disciplines included and the ease or difficulty of the problems to be solved -- would depend upon the goals and upon the prior education and experience of the students. Undoubtedly, problems of a more technical nature would be the basis for programming in the two year community colleges. This does not mean vocational training as we know it. In our changing society the only skills that will not quickly become obsolete are the skills of learning themselves. The subject matter will differ in the community colleges, the colleges, and the universities. But there are things the projects will have in common. They will provide a framework for understanding the nature of man and his environment. They will emphasize the

communication skills necessary for research. And they will attempt to develop a scientific approach to experience; scientific habits of thought and action.

There are, I believe, many advantages to be gained through this approach. First, it cuts down the artificial and destructive barrier we have built between teaching and research. Faculty will view students not as killers of their more important and more profitable research time, but as apprentices who can contribute significantly to research. The students will learn not through absorption and regurgitation, but in the way scientists have always learned -- in the process, the act of discovery itself. And the students will have no cause for complaints about not getting to see, know, or work with faculty. It is probable too, that students, still young enough to avoid complacency, will keep faculty close to the problems, the realities, the relevancies of the real world.

The second advantage is that faculty will be forced to broaden its scope. No longer will it be possible for specialists to limit their reading and talking to their own alter egos, and to continuously repeat the same errors. It is easy for a narrow specialist to maintain his myth of value neutrality when his only serious intellectual contacts share his discipline, his values, and his myth. But when the same specialist must work with faculty from other discpplines, it is not likely that he will long go unchallenged. The unlimited wants, the material self-interest, and the narrow concept of freedom of our economist, for example, will not

easily slip by the anthropologist or psychologist who might see man not as an accumulator, but as a being whose self-interest lies in a struggle for identity, in an attempt to learn and to fulfill his creative potentialities.

The third advantage of our method is that it develops a sense of community. Administrators, faculty and students become participating members rather than the managers, employees and products of the bureaucratic organization. No matter how large the school, the method narrows it down to small, manageable groups of individuals, working cooperatively, and sharing common goals. Gone is the impersonality of the multiversity. The participants all share a role in the determination of purpose, content and method. The students help to select the problems to be solved. And they share the responsibility for the tasks that lie ahead. Their community however, is not the community of a monastic order. The school takes its problems and its data from the broader community. In turn, it gives the community that which only higher education can give -- valid theory to direct the course of social action. In other words the school becomes relevant. It stops fiddling while society writhes. It becomes the source of our needed social reconstruction.

One can correctly point out that educators are very much involved in the community today -- that as consultants to government, business and labor and through their research efforts, they make major contributions to social action. True, but they are not their own masters. It is their employers or grantors who ask the questions

and decide what problems are to be solved. Generally these employers seek competitive advantage rather than criticism. Whether the purpose of the assignment is to produce a better missile, test a better pill, make workers happy so that they will produce more, outsell product X or design an improved pension plan -- it is to do better that which is already being done. Thus, our consultants are in the service of the existing institutional arrangements, the present values; they are in the service of the status quo. They are not our specialist in constructive criticism and social change.

We arrive at the fourth and last advantage. The method helps the student to develop commitment to society and to social goals. It is therefore an attack upon that malignancy which plagues modern man -- the boredom and cynicism which we call alienation. The theories of alienation are legion and pervade the pages of social criticism. Nor has the theme been missed by the humanities. Wherever there is literature, art, the mass media -- there can be found the lonely, pathetic, apathetic, alienated man -- be he dropout, hippy, alcoholic, addict, hell's angel, or clean shaven business man or college professor who wonders why, with all his success, he is bugged by guilt, dissatisfaction, a feeling that he is somehow without feeling. Certainly when one is at a loss to understand his environment; when he is the object, not the subject of change; when he is buffeted by events he can neither comprehend nor control -- he will be alienated. The method, by getting the student to doubt, question, and test; by introducing him to risk and experimentation; by giving him authority as well as responsibility; by providing the

opportunity for sharing purposes and efforts with others; by posing for his consideration not a jungle of isolated courses and facts and unrelated texts, but the real problems of real people in real communities -- helps him to develop the values and theory for understanding his environment and becoming a self-directing citizen.

The approach I have attempted to describe in this necessarily sketchy manner, has been tried, with, I believe, some success -- admittedly, on a very modest scale. It is clear that I have left many questions unanswered and many details to be worked out. There is room for much improvement -- improvement that I hope many educators will make. Perhaps the most important criticism that can be levelled against the method has already been made by one educator who, in reviewing the book[2] in which I expounded the approach, stated: "one doubts whether even the most affluent society could generalize such a training method in a foreseeable future and to that extent it was an abstraction from reality."[3]

In response to this criticism, I must first reiterate that the approach is not proposed as a panacea - but rather as one method to be tested and improved along with many others. More important, I believe that what appears idealistic today may well prove to be very realistic in the near future. Our danger lies not in idealism, but in underestimating the fantastic potentialities of our science and technology. There is no future for timidity or negativism in education. We can no longer afford either the mentality of the institutions of the age of scarcity. Industry has already begun to

recognize that the future lies in education and the development of brain power. The corporation invests in research and development; moves into the mass media; purchases or merges with publishing and textbook companies; and obtains substantial contracts for operating job corps', poverty programs, and training programs, and for trying to solve social problems we in education too frequently ignore. The business community anticipates the day when disarmament or partial disarmament will call for vast expenditures to be invested in education -- and it makes its plans.

If educators are to control the purposes, the content, and the methods of that education, we must be bold, imaginative, and experimental. We must prepare now for the time when education is recognized as America's greatest growth industry -- in the best sense of the term; when we will support it as we now support wars and Manhattan projects; when we realize that we have conquered scarcity, and can move on to our next task -- the development of humanhood; when the thing becomes secondary and the end is man.

Footnotes

[1]John Dewey, Individualism, Old and New (New York; Minton, Balch, 1930), pp. 128-129.

[2]Martin Tarcher, Leadership and the Power of Ideas, (New York; Harper and Row, 1966)

[3]E.M. Hutchinson, Adult Education (British) Vol. 39, # 5, (January, 1967)